

April 9, 1956

DISCUSSES RESOLUTION ON CIA

Fulton Lewis, Jr. at 7:00 P.M. over WDC (Washington) and the Mutual Network:

"The Senate went to work today on a resolution to set up a so-called watchdog committee of the House and Senate to check on the operations of the CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, otherwise known as the CIA, which has been under increasing suspicion for some time past. You probably don't know too much about the CIA, which is the way the CIA prefers it.

"The origin of the agency was at the end of World War II when it was felt that there was a need for a combination of the various intelligence operations which the government conducted during the war in order to keep the government abreast of what was going on throughout the world. Supposedly this was to consolidate all of the foreign intelligence functions of the various branches of government and to bring them all under one unified head to serve in the international field in the same sort of fashion as the FBI serves in the domestic field. The FBI does not function outside of the United States, its territories and possessions, and there are those who contend that the CIA doesn't function at all, and that's what this resolution and stir-up is all about.

"Basically the CIA picture is completely incongruous with all traditional operations of the United States government and, without making any accusations on my own responsibility--after all, I don't know how you'd make any accusations because it's impossible to get any information as to what goes on inside of the Central Intelligence Agency--the fundamental operational pattern of the organization, however, is dangerous in the extreme. It may be entirely all right in its practical operations; it could, however, be one of the most viciously graft- and sedition-ridden poison spots in the entire government for all anybody could know about it or do about it.

"The present director is Mr. Allen Dulles, brother of the Secretary of State, a personable enough individual as an individual. He is a very tweedy sort of an individual with a ragged walrus mustache, who effects eccentric-shaped pipes and leans to extremely aromatic tobacco and never seems to be able to keep his pipe lighted. He was in Switzerland on special intelligence work during the war and this seems to be his chief basis of claim for this job of CIA Director. He explains that he is remaining in Washington at considerable personal sacrifice, which I'm sure is true, and when he came here never had the slightest idea that he would remain so long.

"The key to the complaint about the CIA is not particularly what the CIA has done, because nobody knows or is able to find out what it has done or is doing. Some of the things one stumbles into as one goes brounsing around in foreign countries on world travels, and they are surprising. For example, it is common information that the CIA puts a major portion of the financing for the activities of so-called Radio Free Europe, which parades as a private contribution enterprise and which I permitted to use

sustaining advertising space over the network as a public service on this program until recently.

"It was reported to me from various authentic European sources, however, that Radio Free Europe broadcasts beamed to Czechoslovakia were so sympathetic to the Communist Party line that Radio Prague recorded a number of the programs from the airwaves from Radio Free Europe and later played them back for their own Communist propaganda purposes. One of the best informed, most responsible political observers in Europe, in this country on a recent visit, told me that he had been driving through Austria just before he came here. He tuned in a broadcast in the Czech language, which he assumed all the way through from the tenor of it was from Radio Moscow. At the sign-off, however, it turned out to be Radio Free Europe.

"In the Far East, I found the CIA was reportedly involved in all sorts of commercial operations, businesses and blinks, through which it supposedly was conducting intelligence operations and that it had a very heavy stake in a commercial airline flying between Formosa and Japan. All of this may be entirely all right; I have no way of knowing. But the point of it all and the reason for this resolution that went under debate today is that the organization, with virtually unlimited funds at its disposal from the United States Treasury, is a complete law unto itself.

"It is not subject to any audits by the Comptroller General, no audit by anybody of its books, its funds, or its expenditures. It is not accountable to Congress for anything. Mr. Dulles reports directly and only to the President of the United States who, after all, is hardly able to conduct his own personal detailed check on what Mr. Allen Dulles tells him is going on in CIA. I don't mean to question for a single moment the personal integrity of Mr. Allen Dulles or any of his aides, for that matter, but Mr. Allen Dulles did not staff this organization; rather he inherited the organization and its staffing from predecessors, including one General Walter Bedell Smith.

"And, with the untold hundreds of millions of dollars which the organization has to spend every year, the sponsors of this organization in Congress say, or this resolution in Congress say, that it is an extremely unhealthy thing for this operation to continue on a blank check basis with no information at all by Congress or the public as to what's going on.

"What the resolution proposes to do is to have this watchdog committee operate in much the same manner as the existing Joint Atomic Energy Committee, which keeps a watchful eye on the functioning of the necessarily confidential atomic energy program, and to keep that eye on a strictly confidential basis. It would not control the operations of the CIA; it would not even interfere with the CIA program, but at least, the Congress would know what is going on, or an agency of the Congress would, and whether the agency is functioning effectively, which is more than anybody knows at the present time. Even the personnel lists of the CIA are strictly confidential and Congress is unable to get any information about who is employed, or how many people are employed or why, and what their jobs are."